

1. COL SEMONITE - ASSISTANT COMMANDANT of the ENGINEER SCHOOL, gives updates and impressions.

Members of the Regiment: As many of you have heard, I assumed the position of Assistant Commandant of the U.S. Army Engineer School on 25 MAY. I am extremely excited to be able to work with MG Castro and the FLW team to help lead the Transformation of the Engineer Regiment in the next few years. In the last 30 days I visited numerous Engineers from the Active Army, USAR, and National Guard, from tactical unit to MACOM level - stretching from the NTC to the Pentagon and various sites in between. I want to take a few minutes and give you some of my initial impressions I have and highlight some updates and opportunities we will face in the next few weeks before the next blast.

A. YOU HAVE A GREAT TEAM AT THE ENGINEER SCHOOL: After working with almost all the current Engineer issues in the PENTAGON for the last year, I was very aware of the excellent contributions the ENGINEER SCHOOL staff makes in all facets of the transformation. After working and living with this same team at FLW for the last 30 days, however, I have gained a new respect and admiration for their dedication and professionalism. From the DA civilian professionals, to the hard-charging Drill Sergeants and Instructors, to the focused and persistent Training and Concept development staffs, and to the full spectrum of leadership - I was really impressed by the daily contributions and commitment by this team to support the field. While always in need of additional personnel, every member of the USAES team knows the regimental priorities, focuses on producing results that pay dividends to the regiment, and puts support and response to our warfighting forces foremost on their daily agenda.

B. A GREAT DEAL OF SENIOR TRANSITION IN USAES: Spearheaded by BG Bill and Jill McCoy, the incumbent team comprised of the LEAKES, KINGSTONS, O'DONOVANS, McDANIELSs, GROSSKRUGERS, and too many more to mention enjoyed a very successful year accomplishing unprecedented results and passed the reins to the new inbound team. The new team will be pretty well set by the end of JUNE. COL Dick Hornack has moved from the Battle Lab working Maneuver Enhancement BDE issues for the MANSCEN Engineer DCD team, and COL Paul Kelly will relinquish command of 1st BDE next week to COL Joe Schweitzer to take over the challenging and critical job of Director of Training. LTC Tony Funkhouser completed an outstanding command tour of the 5th EN BN and will backfill Paul Grosskruger as our Chief of Staff - Mike McGuire has taken command of the 5th and is getting them ready for GWOT duties. LTC Bob Peterson passes the reins of commanding the 577th EN BN today to incoming John Edborg, who is coming out of Germany. My wife Connie and my family will move to FLW in the next few weeks as we get kids out of school and sell our house in VA. In the next few months, COL Lou Marich will become the Deputy Assistant Commandant and COL Tom Crabtree will assume the head of the TPIO-TD office. MG and Judy Castro, CSM and Mrs. Pearson, and the rest of the USAES team have

been the continuity and have done an excellent job farewelling the previous team and welcoming all the new folks.

C. IED WEEK AT THE NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER WAS A GREAT SUCCESS: Since the last ENGINEER BLAST, the Regiment accomplished several critical tasks addressing IED DEFEAT at a week-long conference at NTC. Four critical events were held during the five-day session – *The slide presentations from this conference can be accessed through AKO: Files/U.S. Army Organizations/TRADOC/Fort Leonard Wood/CEHC/SELC Presentations.* The Regiment owes a great thanks to LTC Tom Magness and the full Sidewinder team and COL(R) Jack O'Neil and the AEA team for facilitating all aspects of the week, along with outstanding support by the USAES staff and the excellent ENGINEER and MANEUVER guest speakers with IRAQ and AFGHANISTAN experience.

1. ENGINEER SENIOR LEADER / CSM CONFERENCE: A one day session with over 110 senior Commanders and CSM's to discuss the IED Defeat strategy and address other critical Engineer transformation initiatives being worked by the team.

2. IED DEFEAT SEMINAR: A three day session of briefings and demonstrations on all techniques, procedures, and challenges in the IED strategy was attended by over 400 members of the Joint, Interagency, and Multinational community. A large contingent of DA civilians and Contractors, as well as high percentage of Commanders and CSM's from all components. The highlight of the seminar was the numerous actual on-the-ground demonstrations in an NTC field environment that allowed everyone to see, touch and understand the complexities of both fielded and experimental systems.

3. IED INTEGRATED CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT TEAM (ICDT) BACKBRIEFS: COL Bobby Nicholson, TSM, lead the TRADOC team to discuss and backbrief the ACTION PLANS to the 11 identified solution sets to the IED equation. The mission of the ICDT is to develop full DOTMLPF solutions to actions already fielded by the IED TF and the REF. In other words - once we get systems like the Buffalo to IRAQ - we need to continue to develop the TRAINING, MAINTENANCE, LEADER DEVELOPMENT and associated support pieces for the equipment. It is great to get new equipment in the Combat Zone - but it is critical to ensure that we systemically incorporate all the support mechanisms needed to realize this capability in the deep fight. The ICDT will aggressively work these 11 action plans to continue to spiral new TTP's and equipment identified by field commanders and the R&D / Contractor community into deployed theaters as soon as possible.

D. TRADOC's / MANSCEN CDR's PHILOSOPHY ON RELEVANT TRAINING FOR GWOT: I spent several hours with both MG Castro and GEN Byrnes (TRADOC CDR) in the last few weeks discussing training at FLW. While I have been receiving great soldiers, NCO's Officers, and leaders from FLW over my career in field units, I was very impressed in the current philosophy of the greater TRADOC community with respect to making our training base relevant and responsive. Both CDRs have stressed to the USAES team the importance of

spiraling new lessons learned into all aspects for training at FLW - and that we cannot allow the cumbersome process of institutional training development to hinder our mission of getting today's soldiers and leaders ready to go to war. The schoolhouse is committed to integrating the most important and relevant training into all courses - we will find a way to train the force and let cumbersome paperwork changes and resource impacts follow. TTPs and lessons learned that have minimal new equipment requirements are easy - it is our goal to spiral improvements into the curriculum on a daily versus yearly basis. If we have to take risk in more technical or seldom used skills to be able to apply time on warfighting and warrior tasks - we can and will make those decisions fast and implement at our level. While we cannot EXTEND the duration of courses, we want your feedback on skills and tools that you feel we need to spend more time on, and we will balance the rest of the curriculum. Bottom line - our leadership endorses smart, responsive training that gives you the most highly trained soldiers - if you have recommendations, it is our job to figure out how to implement them - FAST!

E. STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION EVENTS IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS: Want to inform you of some on-going, critical actions we are working so you can input and give us feedback if needed. Look for updates on these and other initiatives in the weeks ahead as we work actions with the TRADOC and DA staffs.

1. FORCE STRUCTURE - DA continues to try to trim over 20K off the overall DA proposed force structure to meet DOD ENDSTRENGTH goals - LTC Mike Presnell and LTC Dan Cummings have done a great job of protecting our capabilities and required force structure. There has been no significant impact from our approved FAA and MSFA results.

2. ME BDE's - Under the leadership of COL Hornack and now, COL Kevin Lamar from the MANSCEN FUTURES CENTER, the ME BDE continues to gain momentum for the combined effects of the ENGR, CHEMICAL, MP, and even the ADA capabilities under a common formation HQ's. All the school commandants will attend an Integrated Concept Team session with the TRADOC (CAC) staff on 11-14 JULY with a follow-on brief to the DA G3. I understand there are still a number of questions from the field on the ME BDE - let us know via our RFI system and we will get you an update or an answer to your specific issues. The final numbers, locations, and activation timelines are all still tentative.

3. BRAC / REPOSITIONING / STATIONING: Given that force structure by component has been allocated and component plans have been drawn to execute BRAC and global repositioning, the final modications are being worked by the COMPONENT ENGR's to lock in all future flags and Force Structure. Senior active, Guard and Reserve leaders have a basic understanding of the long term plan and as we get DA level decisions on stationing, we will continue to inform the field. We will continue to focus on the execution and synchronization mission to turn the plan into reality.

F. **AC SUMMARY:** Although we will undergo significant transition this summer, the USAES staff is still committed to providing you with quality personnel and products that will help support the warfighter. Call us if you needed assistance with new TTPs, equipment, or Operational Needs Statements, as well as giving us your opinions on actions we are still working. We have a robust [RFI tracking system](#), and will ensure you get an answer once you connect to the [USAES website](#). I am glad to be on board to help solve issues and challenges as we realize a TRANSFORMED ENGINEER REGIMENT.

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